

An aerial photograph of a large, multi-story building complex, possibly a government or institutional building, with a central courtyard. The building is surrounded by parking lots and roads. To the left of the building, there is a large open area. To the right, there are more buildings and a road. The image is in grayscale.

Postspectacle  
Shelter

access point

BEZNA #3

# BEZNA #3

(Bezna = consistent darkness + diffused fear)

August 2012

Postspectacle Shelter at the House of People **The Presidential Candidate**

The Crises of (Com)Passion and the Corrupt Audience **Alina Popa**

What is Eva Peron **Veda Popovici**

We Are All Reptilians Now **Florin Flueraș**

Political Therapy **Valentina Desideri**

The Specter of Communist Feminism: Dead Evil Women are Moving Tables!  
**Mihai Lukacs**

A Wolf in a Sheep's Clothing **Arnold Țlahter**

Statement **APARAT SECURITY**

Punishing the Poor in Budapest **Ciumafaiu**

Postspectacle Shelter Drawing **Brynjar Bandlien**

Survival Architecture in the Global Slum (II) **Candidatul la Președinție**

Tragic Seconds Heroic Days **G.A.Neagu**

Casa Pop.-up.jpg **Arnold Țlahter**

(Texts around the Postspectacle Shelter in the House of the People;

details about the Postspectacle Shelter here:

<http://postspectacle.blogspot.ro/2012/04/presidential-candidate-invites-you-to.html>)

## The Presidential Candidate Offers Shelter in The House of the People

*It looks like what we, The Presidential Candidate, have been anticipating in the last years, with our "no hope" messages and slogans, is already at work. This is not perceived as an eccentric, provocative vision anymore, it is the banal reality that everybody can feel. So what now? What's happening when you give up hope and you are pushed into the corner?*

*There is a feeling of urgency, fundamental issues need to be immediately confronted and we will do exactly that. The House of the People (Ceașescu's Palace) will be transformed temporarily into a real house of the people, where, for a few days, free education, free health services, free food, political therapy, a bit of everything that now is disappearing, will be provided.*

*Still, there is a sensation that it's too little and, maybe, already too late, so we don't know if we can avoid adding a dystopian dimension to the whole situation. The events within the House of the People will be a good opportunity for thinking the present and feeling the (no) future in this first Postspectacle Shelter.*

Wednesday 25 Apr, 19.00

- Does Europe Have Any Future? - workshop with Franco Bifo Berardi

Thursday 26 Apr, 19.00 – 23.00

- The Official Opening of the People's Shelter - with The Presidential Candidate and his guests
- Paraparada - Aparat Security
- Samusocial - Elena Adam
- Reintegration - Vali Zaharescu aka The Romanian Bum, chief editor Gazeta Străzii

Friday 27 Apr, 16.00 – 23.00

- Facing the Wall, Disaster, Collapse and the Impossibility-to-not-Love - workshop with Akseli Virtanen
- Meditation - Valentina Desideri
- Film Projections

Saturday 28 Apr, 16.00 – 23.00

- Facing the Wall, Disaster, Collapse and the Impossibility-to-not-Love – workshop with Akseli Virtanen
- Bezna #3 Launching
- Queer Apocalypse vs The Salvation Child - Mihai Lukacs
- Soulstorming – The Bureau of Melodramatic Research (Alina Popa, Irina Gheorghe)
- We Are All Reptilians Now - Florin Flueraș

Sunday 29 Apr, 15.00 – 23.00

- Dystopian Reading Group
- 112 - Iuliana Stoianescu
- Survival Guide - Cosima Opârtan
- About Migrants- Simina Guga
- Peronism Will Be Revolutionary or It Will Not Be At All - Eva Peron
- Postspectacle Condition - Ion Dumitrescu
- Public Life - Private Life, Where are the Limits - Caroline Keppi-Gurita
- FRR/kunsthalle.ro presents: Water Strategy - Alexandru Gurita

In the Shelter every day:

- Simple yet Nourishing Food - Simina Guga, Ovidiu Anemjoaicei, Ștefan Tiron...
- Political Therapy - Valentina Desideri
- Medical Care - Iuliana Stoianescu

Workshops:

*Facing the Wall, Disaster, Collapse and the Impossibility-to-not-Love* - workshop with Akseli Virtanen:  
Exhaustion of the possible. Three metamorphoses of the spirit. From biopower to arbitrary power. To function "in another way" (Benjamin). Economy as oikonomia. Topoi koinoi. An-arche. The secret bond between anarchy and government. Production of ethics. Production of memory. Giorgio Agamben and Paolo Virno on coming politics. Good and evil share the same root. Distance to environment. Mode of potentiality. Endless regression. Openness to the world. Experience of potentiality. Exhaustion of the realizable vs. exhaustion of the possible. Pathos of distance. Disaster, fragilization and desubjection. Impossibility-to-not-love. Copoiesis. Kafkamachine. Cooperation to come. Robin Hood Investment Fund of the Precariat. Minor Asset Management.



Franco Bifo Berardi's *Does Europe have any future?* workshop from the presidential tribune in the Postspectacle Shelter

## The Crises of (Com)Passion and the Corrupt Audience

Alina Popa (co-initiator of the Bureau of Melodramatic Research)

- *an analysis of affect circulation and border movement in the Postspectacle Shelter*(1) -

### The Crises of (Com)passion

How does the relationship between compassion and injustice work? And how does it function in an institutionalized museum context? Does it work to produce a shift or is it a mere dioramization, a murky mirror of reality? Capital of compassion is being constantly accumulated through the charity-economy with artists, NGO's and foundations acting as agents of the soul, that *soul* which is put to work(2) in the new financialized economy. The whole image production representing far-off colonial subjects and as well as hidden backyard misery within the first world is in search of the becoming-spectator. Becoming-spectator to the pain of others generates the illusion of agency through the involvement in a circuit of feelings that actually sustains and reproduces social injustice and economic inequality. There is always this becoming-spectator implicit in the representation of injustice.

Compassion implies hope, hope for justice, it implies the transformation of a singular instance in a potentiality for its perpetual existence. But capitalism today relies on the *relentless branding and marketing of even the most 'inner' aspects of subjective experience*(3), so 'hope' is immediately commodified as a warranty that the system will go on, will have a future, so that the structural inequalities and generalized injustice cannot be challenged. Thus, we have to acknowledge that at work in the new economy of emotions that animates current financial numbers and profits is a compassion-without-hope. That is why in the Postspectacle Shelter - with its No-Hope-slogans and the performance of compassion brought simultaneously onto the artistic and political scene(4) - there was no illusion. The spectacle of compassion was made manifest, all that was performed was pure soothing effect (inviting the homeless, offering food, medical care, knowledge, affectivity and voice). In the neoliberal reality, in order to annihilate resistance to the exploitation both of humans and non humans (animals and environment), big companies and supra-democratic organizations (World Bank, FMI etc.) use whitewashing strategies such as engaging in fighting poverty (when at the same time they perpetuate it), in investing in research to clean the ecosystem (after they have

destroyed it), in rehabilitating communities (before they dislocate or evict it) etc. In this 'reality' there is always the 'spoonful of sugar to make the medicine go down'. In the Postspectacle Shelter there was only the 'sugar', the comforting, without the 'medicine' and nevertheless without hope. This is why, although there were no illusions, the situation seemed unreal. It was clear that no hope lies in the neoliberal 'spoonful of sugar', but is there any hope at all?



GIVE UP  
HOPE

*Slogan of the Presidential Candidate campaigning in the Postspectacle Shelter*

Who is more prone to being identified as compassionate? The present economy manages compassion as it organizes moods and states of mind. In this emotional organization chart roles are assigned and registered, the psychic space is being constantly modeled and produced on the immaterial assembly line of the postfordist factory. The idea of care becomes a commodity to be sold for profit under the strict regulation of the economic logic. One example of the way this affective regulation works we find in the dominant rhetoric of the West as capitalism arrived in the Eastern Block, at the beginning of the transition period. The West self-proclaimed itself as compassionate and performed the agency of care in the East. So powerful was this ideology that it still pervades public opinion today. For example, there was a comment about the pampers packages brought into the Postspectacle Shelter for a young couple with a baby, which were subsequently identified to have been actually brought by the 'French' - in the foreign AID rhetoric, compassion and help have to come from the West, as from an alien force.

Reversely, in the spectacle of compassion, the subjects of injustice are caught in the trap of performing their suffering in front of an audience who must develop a psychic transformation to not-feel-empathy in order to adapt to the emotional requirements of the neuropolitics at work. Like for

the 'tributes' from *Hunger Games*(5), the spectacle seems the only escape, the only way out from the precarious life and all that you are left with to perform is your own enacted bare life.

How to exhaust this spectacle potential, how to achieve a zero degree of attention which could give way to *affective attention* as opposed to the current marketization of attentiveness? How can we place ourselves in a position of *self-fragilization*(6), which allows not only a power to affect, but *a power to be affected*?(7) Maybe this aesthetic vulnerability implied by the spectacle of suffering can be transformed into an ethical vulnerability - the reciprocal acknowledgement of a shared fragility and precariousness of our body-psyche both politically and ontologically.

### Compassion and distance

There is a multiple layer of distance in compassion. The first layer is the one that enables compassion in the first place, it is the distance between the subject and object of compassion, which involves a sort of hierarchical relationship(8) between the object of compassion that has the suffering itself and the subject of compassion which has the thought of suffering. Compassion in itself involves an unequal relationship between the thought of emotion which then becomes an emotion in itself (feeling the pain of others) and the emotion lived (one's own suffering, feeling pain).

The second layer of distance comes from *the overwhelming enormity of the painful spectacle*(9), which results in feeling powerless. The scenes of vulnerability produce a desire to withhold compassionate attachment, to be irritated by the scene of suffering. The spectacularization of poverty (in numerous commercials, TV docs, movies) produces a numbness of empathic feeling. It produces the possibility to disconnect, to run away from the scene of suffering, to refuse actual engagement with the reality of pain. Lack of empathy (impairment of compassion) and apatheia (impairment of pathos) are the states of mind produced by the late capitalism with its now primary function as an emotion-shaping belief system.

The third layer of distance has its origins in the Cartesian view on the mind-body relation, where one's own body and emotionality is perceived as external, detached and hence controllable by the sovereign-mind and rationality. In this case, distance - which actually characterizes the whole post-Renaissance scientific, patriarchal paradigm - is projected upon one's own body-mind. Through will, judgment and reason, the unruly, animalic body

should be tamed and controlled, the same way that the state functioned as the centre of command to discipline the bodies of people under its rule. As Silvia Federici was writing: *in other words, ... the human body and not the steam engine, and not even the clock, was the first machine developed by capitalism*(10) At the same time, as a historical moment, the Cartesian paradigm coincides with the advent of capitalism, the erosion of community and of every form of communality, based on proximity and compassion, as opposed to alienation and estrangement, which were triggered by the dominance of capital and money relations.

The unruly body-mind is now controlled by psychopharmacology and the medico-chemical apparatus, an extension of the Cartesian paradigm modeled by the present financial capitalism. So what the current economy produces is the automation of the body-psyche through its hegemonic machines that generate the plot we play in without sensing, the affects we capture without knowing.

Could we then think how the automatized body-mind - automatized both in the Foucauldian sense of discipline and control and in the posthumanist sense of the prostheticity(11) - could revolt against its own affective, bodily programming?

### ***Bodies out of place. The power of homelessness***

As we are more and more becoming precarious and home-less, there is a backlash of intense movements of home-finding(12), home-creating as all-too-familiar (and dangerous) ways of escaping the frail ground of economic insecurity and no-future-ism. The new old homes are the solid, enclosed (and oppressive) territories of nationalism, racism, homophobia, speciesism, all the community-forming practices based upon exclusion and impaired compassion - on identity politics be it related to nation, ethnicity, sex orientation, species, and so on. The alignment of family and home-ness with whiteness, heteronormativity and *carnophallogocentrism*(13) *is powerful, and works to transform all these features into familial ties, into a form of racial kindred that recognises all non-white* [I would add here the queer subjects] *others as strangers, as 'bodies out of place'*(14) Identity politics is based on an unidirectional empathy (excluding the *bodies out of place*), on a compassion-within-borders which is strictly regulated top-down by the neoliberal economic hegemony, by the state and by religion.

Likewise, the institutionalization of resistance and autonomy potential through the NGO system is part of another home-seeking mechanism, which acts

through division and dissipation. It finds a cozy home for every social anomaly, disregarding the 'homelessness' of all these anomalies in accordance with the *arbitrariness of power*(15) and avoiding their common cause which is left unchallenged (this would in fact terminate NGOism, as it's precisely the neoliberal system that is funding it). We can speak of unidirectional empathy to characterize the affective restraints of the charity economy that *treats the symptoms and not the sources*. This system of rationalized, algorithmic philanthropy is another mechanism by which *a generalized impaired compassion is being institutionalized on a grand scale*(16)

For art, home equals the art institution. There is an inflation of art with socio-political content today, which is in constant search for homes, and like the NGO system, it doesn't challenge the causes but only quarantined effects, disregarding the position from which it criticizes and who actually profits from the symbolic capital it amasses. As long as it remains inside the comfort zone of the home-institution, the subversive, disruptive potential of this alleged revolutionary art is easily tamed and its acts of representation cannot escape depolitization, its semiotic charge cannot turn into real action. Maybe political art today relies too much on a hope-rhetoric that disregards all the present refrains of collapse echoed by an art system deeply embedded in the capitalist profit-logic, by the fiasco-politics of Western representative democracy, the abysmal effects of the current expanded biopolitics or the coming ecological catastrophe.

The state of homelessness is usually associated with the refusal to work, it's a position outside the production time - which is not anymore factory or corporation time, but personal time, as productivity now equates the speed of reaction, the velocity of response-ability and the constant shaping of subjectivity. Homelessness is sheer precariousness (physical) combined with dark precarity (economical). It's the anticipation of the imminent generalized dystopia. A homeless on the street was saying: *I have no place to sleep so at night I study, I do my research on the street*. The depressed cannot wake up, the homeless cannot sleep. There is an inverted depression characterizing the homeless. They are hyper-active waste of the neoliberal flood of meaning and information overflow, they embody the dark restlessness and über-consciousness.

The newly developed system of 'Food Banks'(17) in Great Britain seems like a prophecy for the reality to come. The homeless are offered due-to-expiration supermarket products in return for sentiments of

gratefulness towards the merciful new economy and the religious big-hearted-ness - aid and compassion usually come along together with religious indoctrination, as in the case of the Food Banks. The present charity system replaced the function of the former welfare state, as the emotional turn in politics took place along with the post-70's financialized economy. Compassion management has changed from being regulated by public policies which guaranteed the economically disenfranchised the right to social benefits to being part of corporation strategies and the affiliated NGO system. Social assistance moved from being a right to being an opportunity that depends on humbleness and speed, another link in the neoliberal chain of impaired compassion. The Trusts (although it's a name worthy of dystopian novels, these are foundations which administrate the Food Banks) manage compassion and food. The food they distribute through their centers (one example is the Hope Centre-another name worthy of the same dystopian script) is actually the debris of technologically processed stamps, which remain unsold at the end of the day. The circuit of compassion is completed by the specificity of the working conditions. The standardized care is performed by volunteers. Volunteerism is the legitimate form of compassion today - it is based on unidirectional empathy on one side (that promoted by the employer - foundations, trusts) and on lack of empathy on the other side (the volunteers perform unpaid labour). So no trust and no hope.

The Postspectacle Shelter made visible the crises of compassion, recognizing that the only possible place to defend while affirming the common fragility of the bodies (in and *out of place*) is a No Hope shelter which takes over a public institution by overstating its past and present failed promises of compassion and care for the people: The House of the People which now houses the Romanian Parliament. The grand narrative produced the concept of a grand 'home' which was never belonging to the people as its name promised. At the same time, the current representative democracy failed to meet the necessities of the demos, the people itself stopped believing in it.

There was an interesting relation between food and affect in the Postspectacle Shelter. Food was the materialized desire, it was what actually becomes body - the emotions shape bodies as well. So on this level there is a resemblance with the two main acts of production, circulation, distribution: food and affect. Hierarchically, food has always been subaltern to the higher functions of the body-mind. How do we then re-think a flat organization of food and affect?

The homeless who usually come to openings for a snack and a drink (in Romanian *Pișcotari*) were always treated as inferior because they preferred food to emotional, cathartic states of mind allegedly stimulated by art. Could there be an emancipatory potential in the subjectivity of this spectator (embodied by the homeless) who doesn't privilege catharsis over bodily needs?



*'Food Bank' in the Postspectacle Shelter*

In a society ruled by economic laws, which produces value mostly immaterially, outnumbering by far the profits made by industry and agriculture, the politics of food is well entangled with a politics of emotions. How to incorporate the immateriality of food and at the same time how to feel the materiality of affect? Both are flows that shape subjectivity and create forms of life. Like in one example above, eating meat has to do with the love for the nation and the values promoted by the official politics (for example, heteronormativity). Moreover, thinking the environment in terms of domination and extraction since ancient times has created subjectivities that developed lack of feelings or *apatheia* to cope with the violence and exploitation necessary for food to be produced.

Homelessness becomes a kind of ominous, pre-apocalyptic state, both virtual and actual. In its actuality it defines *bodies out of place*, at the mercy of the neoliberal compassion apparatus. Nevertheless, in its virtuality 'homelessness' can become a state of continuous de-subjectivation, a zero degree of Being, from where new forms of life autonomous from the hegemony of the economic system could appear. The refusal of 'homes' is bound up to the refusal of work, to the acceptance of fragility, of precariousness, to the escape from normative subjectivities. How to overcome attachments to 'homes' that promise security and success and at the same time end up abiding sociopathic subjects, depressed and standardized bits of aliveness? 'Homelessness' at molecular level is the displacement of the habitual microstructures from the monolithic

body-home and their autonomization. When the body de-organizes and de-connects from its familiar, habitual structure, when the body movements override the normative patterns prescribed by the late capitalist rule, then the body can become something else.

### The Corrupt Audience and the Illusion of Spectatorship

*The audience-performers/ performing audience : the guards (spp), the museum wards, the director, the employees, the artists, the homeless, the ngo, the philosophers of depression, surveillance cameras, the golden bulan, the black bulan etc.*

What happens when the only audience is corrupt and does not respond to the same rules of valorization as the ones established by the history of an institution, like the museum? New forms of truth telling can arise if the spectator de-automatizes affectively and semiotically from the system of valorization that makes art art. This transgression of the codes could actually possible on other levels as well. Maybe bringing the homeless as audience is a necessary act of cynicism, it breaks the art bubble *autarkeia*, it annihilates the usual self-gratulatory ceremony (which happens in restricted circles, while self-praising the practice of addressing a wider public). This practice can be a contemporary *parrhesiastic* game to change perception of art/institutions/politics for performers and audience alike. The homeless seem to be paradigmatic for the function of the subversive spectator. They are the unbearable audience, the constant reminder that biopolitics is real, that's what is at stake is life governed by politics, that the spectacle is outside and we are merely training to take part in it.

Freeing the homeless from 'representativity', from being caught in the rogue algorithm of compassion operates a shift in the relationship between representation and injustice. There is no sure 'home' for the spectator and the performer. The audience is as fragile as the performing bodies. The assigned roles inside the spectacle are in themselves precarious, unstable, oscillatory. The partial-spectator becomes the partial-performer and vice versa. There is no pure audience. Like in the performance of compassion, mere spectatorship generates the illusion of agency, but there is first and foremost the illusion of spectatorship that shadows any oscillation between comforting agency and the much-feared passivity. The stakes are not about seeing a spectacle, but about sensing the movement, the uncertainty of every moment, the fragility of borders and of the possible outcomes.

What does it mean to be passive as a corrupt audience in a museum? Isn't this passivity a subversion of the codes imposed by such an institution? Why is passivity always associated with the incapacity of judgment? Why is this incapacity demonized? Isn't this incapacity preferable to the process of surrendering one's skills to a machine, giving them up in the technosphere/infosphere, where then by algorithmic processes (which are beyond individual capacity of judgment and understanding anyway) value is formed and inequality perpetuated and enforced.

'Passive' and 'passion' have a common Latin root – *passio*, which means 'suffering'. Com-passion should be common passion, a shared passion, a suffering experienced together. *To be passive is to be enacted upon, as a negation that is already felt as suffering. The fear of passivity is tied to the fear of emotionality, in which weakness is defined in terms of a tendency to be shaped by others.*(18) The emotions cannot be incubated in the body, there is no well-sealed interiority. There is a permeability, fluidity of affectivity, no vacuum chamber to isolate affect inside the body. That is why the psychological apparatus is so deceptive. In compassion, co-passivity should be the shared capacity of being affected, of being able to co-suffer and should be shared by the partial-spectator (the subject of compassion) and the partial-performer (the object of compassion).

1. In the Postspectacle Shelter the homeless were offered food and medical assistance, and a voice in the Presidential Campaign. The House of People was given back to the People, all these between the heavy brackets of double walls, that of the Parliament and that of the contemporary art museum.

<http://postspectacle.blogspot.ro/2012/04/presidential-candidate-invites-you-to.html>

2. Franco "Bifo" Berardi, *The Soul at Work From Alienation to Autonomy*, Cambridge, Mass. and London: The MIT Press, 2009

3. Steven Shavero, *Post-Cinematic Affect: On Grace Jones, Boarding Gate and Southland Tales* in Film-Philosophy Journal, Vol 14, No 1 (2010) <http://www.film-philosophy.com/index.php/f-p/article/view/220>

4. The Postspectacle Shelter was inside the House of the People (which presently hosts the Romanian Parliament), inside the National Museum of Contemporary Art (MNAC).

5. *Hunger Games* is a 2012 SF film, directed by Gary Ross, after the book of Suzanne Collins. *The story takes place in a dystopian post-apocalyptic future in the nation of Panem, where 12 boys and 12 girls must participate in the Hunger Games—a televised annual event in which the "tributes" are required to fight to the death until there is one remaining victor.* (Wikipedia)

6. term used by Bracha Ettinger, lecture, Future Art Base,

Helsinki, 2012. *Self-fragilization* in Ettinger's sense implies the dispersal and loss of the self, becoming sub-subjective. It is thus a concept opposed to oversensitivity.

7. Akseli Virtanen, lecture, Future Art Base, Helsinki, 2012.

8. Lauren Berlant (Ed.), *Compassion The Culture and Politics of an Emotion*, New York and London: Routledge 2004

9. Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002

10. Silvia Federici, *The Caliban and the Witch*, New York: Autonomedia, 2004

11. Cary Wolfe, *What is posthumanism?*, Minneapolis London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010. *Prostheticity in the sense of the embodiment and embeddedness of the human being in not just its biological but also its technological world, the prosthetic coevolution of the human animal with the technicity of tools and external archival mechanisms (such as language and culture).*

12. One of the most repeated slogans of Mihail Neamțu (an important figure of the center-right party in Romania, assiduous promoter of the neoliberal doctrine) which he propagandistically used by in his hysterical speech against the ruling social-democrat party during the right wing's official demonstration at the beginning of July 2012 was "Welcome Home!". He was referring to the alive, dead and 'unborn' Romanians patriots who would not emigrate.

13. In the periods of mad cow disease outbreak, in countries such as Great Britain in the 80's and 90's and Canada in 2000's there was a powerful nationalist discourse tied to the consumption of beef. As Nicole Shukin notes, there were *dramatic public displays of cooking, serving, and consuming Canadian beef, modeling a metabolic commitment to the health and "carnophallogocentrism" of the nation through patriotic displays of meat eating. Not only is the purity of a nation's meat representative, on a deeply affective level, of its domestic economy; meat also enciphers ideological investments in the masculinist virility and racial purity of the national body.* (Nicole Shukin, *Animal Capital Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times*, Minneapolis London: University of Minnesota Press, 2009)

14. Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004

15. *Arbitrary power* is a concept developed by Akseli Virtanen.

16. Gary Olson, *Empathy and Neuropolitics: This is your brain on neoliberal culture. Any questions?*  
<http://home.moravian.edu/public/polsci/pdfs/EmpathyAnd%20Neuropolitics.pdf>

17. Amelia Gentleman, *Food banks: a life on handouts*, 18 July 2012 <http://pocket.co/sMuFS>

18. Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004



## What is Eva Peron?

Veda Popovici

The short story is that she is born in 1919, in an Argentinean village to a poor family. Illegitimate daughter of Don Juan Duarte, she is brought up by her mother. At an early age she leaves her family and village. She continues her life in the big city of Buenos Aires becoming an actress. After being lovers for a year, Eva Duarte becomes the wife of general Juan Peron in 1946, later to become president of Argentina.

So better yet, what is Eva Peron?

Inferior companion of a military, doll-wife of the dictator, national myth, spectre that haunts revolutionary fantasies. Eva Peron was Evita, a name she accepted only from her beloved descamisados, the shirtless ones, the poorest social group, the ones that do not care about social boundaries and would undress publicly if needed. They saw in her just Evita, no last names, as she is their symbol, their representative, an Eve that came from the poor, the undressed, the unrepresented, the humiliated, the forgotten. The multitudes of workers, villagers and peasants supported her candidacy to be vice-president in 1951.

### At the House of People

This April, during the four-day shelter offered by the Presidential Candidacy at the House of People in Bucharest I summoned Eva to give one of her speeches[1] to the descamisados multitude that gathered there. At the shelter, food was offered to anyone that came. Also a free speech tribune, an open mike was prepared for anyone who wanted to share something at the shelter or try to candidate for presidency.

Reclaiming the long-lost potential of the House of People[2], the shelter overwrites the institution of the Museum of Contemporary Art, the only way of accessing the building. The shelter pushed the cynical dynamics of the museum: originating in the universalist, democratic ideals of the Enlightenment, the museum is supposed to be for everybody. But, cynically, it is just aimed at a cultural elite, sufficiently educated to access the intricate language of art. Inserted into the building that houses the simulacra of representativity and totality that is the Parliament, the Museum is just another tool in consolidating the monopoly of power for a few.

To attack this simulacra is to proclaim that the shelter is for everyone. But how to materialize this virtual totality in the spaces of an elite? One answer

was to invite one of the most underprivileged social categories of society's totality, the ones in true need of shelter: the homeless. Once this multitude was actually represented at the shelter, Evita spoke to them and to others too, in a desperate beyond-the-grave attempt to rebuild the political house of all.

These are some fragments of her speech:

*That what had to be done in my country was nothing less than a Revolution.*

*And when what needs to be done is a revolution, then the persons capable to venture all the way on a such difficult path are not many. They are actually so few, that we could say they are missing. Many revolutions have been started here and elsewhere. But a revolution is a new, difficult road and it is only for those that feel an irresistible attraction for risky endeavors. This is why have failed and will always fail those revolutions desired by the people and even done with its total support.*

*(...) It is important to talk about "Evita", and not out of pride, but because the one who understands "Evita", can more easily understand the descamisados, the people themselves, and it will never feel of itself more than it is... Never will it become oligarchic, the most feared thing that can happen to a Peronist!*

*I know that when they were criticizing me and the movement, what actually hurt them was the Revolution. Peron will not let down his people. And as long as this is true, they will not come back. So they try to destroy me from a distance. They also know that I never work for myself, that I do not search for a personal advantage, and this incites them. They would like to see me fall into selfishness and greed to show to the people that amongst them I am actually searching for myself. They know that in this way they can stray far from the people. They don't understand that, in my efforts, I seek nothing else but the triumph of Peron and his cause, for they are the triumph of the people.*

*Not even when I go to those that work or suffer I don't search for a selfish satisfaction through a so-called personal sacrifice. Every day, I try hard to eliminate from my soul this sentimental attitude for those who ask for it. I do not want to be ashamed of myself in front of you. I work to fulfill my duty of accomplishing justice.*

*With no poetry, acting, no pose or romance. Even when I meet with the ones most in need, no one can say that I play the charity lady that for a moment abandons her personal wealth to pose as doing philanthropy. (...)*

*Although the fraud through which people have been deceived for so long is a fundamental problem, and although administrative corruption has been a serious issue for the last government, the most important – and the offensive matter for the people – is the exploitation of man by man. And even more, the selling of the country's resources to the foreign power that can pay most.*

*Unfortunately for the Argentinians, not only was the country sold, but heavy tribute has been brought with the only purpose of making important friends abroad. And this became the most important objective. (...)*



It was almost as though not a specter was speaking but an actual person that spoke of today's Romania and not Argentina's 40s. A populist speech, it promised everything and delivered nothing. Eva, once an actress is acted by someone. So is the text a spectacle?

What remains undoubted is the genderized body of a woman dressing and undressing to enact Evita and a strong desire for the words and the person to be true, the acute need for actual representativity. Eva Peron, a product of a dictatorship, was the only one that could truly reclaim her identification with the idealized subjectivity of the multitudes, "the people". If just one person, the absolute representative of all, should reside in the House of People, it couldn't be Ceausescu but it should be her.

### The Double

"Eva is my work of art. I made her to be my shadow.", Juan Peron writes in his autobiography[3]. In the Christian narration of the beginning of the world, the woman Eve is a creation made out of man. Here she is again in Eva, the actual embodiment of the presence of woman as a category in the great narrative of modern political his-story. The woman as a poor double, she is the imperfect copy of the king, the savior and the poet.

Eva Peron is neither an object, nor a subject but the striving of the former to become the latter. The object became subject by empowering women to vote and setting a model of compassion and care for the economically oppressed, striving to create real political representativity for these categories.

Eva Peron maybe a who, but Eva P. is a what, just any other Eve.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August 1951, huge crowds of people rallied the Avenida 9 de Julio, asking that Evita claim her righteous place of leading them. But Eva was a woman and not just any woman, but an actress, and that equaled in Argentina's 40s to being a prostitute. The political elite comprised of military men couldn't allow such an introoder to command them[4]. Named by the Argentinean Congress, „the spiritual leader of the nation” she is not the actual political leader, the administrative head of the state. She is a double, she is „instead” of the dictatorship, „instead” of the ideology, outside of the system and yet its most vital part. She was acknowledged as representing the spirit, the soul of the subject of ideology: the people.

She dies a few months later at just 33 years old, the same age as another great refused that claimed the rights of the oppressed.

### Decolonizing the Corpse

The body of Eva was given a State funeral. This is the only not-presidential corpse to benefit from such an honour. The loss of Evita was great for the peronist regime: it meant the loss of the last remaining element of representativity of the regime. Now it was nothing more than a dictatorship that promised and posed in an emancipatory and social political regime. To prolong this great power of Evita, Peron ordered the body to be embalmed and intended to built it a mausoleum greater than the Statue of Liberty or Lenin's Mausoleum. Unfortunately for Peron, the regime fell[5] and the corpse's power would be neutralized by the following men-in-power. Too sacred to touch, too precious to be abandoned, the corpse was traveled through the world in an attempt to destroy its aura and thus cause its popular oblivion.

Object of orientalisation, it became yet another symbol of the exoticism of second or third world countries, of their eccentricity when it comes to politics. State-bureaucrats become immortal gods, the subject of ever-lasting cults. Their corpses never have a natural afterlife, a gradual fading into nature, but are kept sacred. Eva was viewed by her descamisados a saint, a true holly person and was dedicated in every fateful home a mini-shrine. But to the hungry-for-power elite Eva Peron had been an

easy actress, a greedy wife, a charitable lady, and its corpse nothing more than a doll that could mesmerize the masses.

Reproducing this highly political representation of Eva, most contemporary cultural productions like biographies, movies, theater plays, etc.[6] depict her as a greedy, ambitious woman, that made her way to power through the beds of important men. At best a subordinated, submissive wife, she is also portrayed as a bad actress with poor morality. Even more, Eva seems just another dark-haired woman to dye her hair blond, to transform her body in the more beautiful European other.

### ...the Beginning and the End

There is a great prophecy[7] that says that in the end times, the prostitute will lead the world. Those are the times of Apocalypse, the lifting of the veil, the times of dis-order and chaos. Eva Peron was the closest to the fulfillment of such a prophecy, however authoritative agencies kept his-story going and the fantasy postponed. Called upon at the Shelter, Eva Peron becomes Eva P., an incantation for the reality of the Apocalypse prophecy.

The time of the AntiRepublic haunts our present. It is there in the anti-communist ideology, in the virulent demonization of the looser of the Cold War, the so-called anti-democratic, communist East. It is there in the recent fall of the so-called Arab dictatorships. It is also there, in the visions of anarchists of all times and now in the practice of the ones in Greece. The AntiRepublic is also so present in the measures of radical neo-liberals that prophet the reign of the free market. But most of all, the AntiRepublic is already present everywhere in what is obvious to many: the failure of representative democracy.

Eva was the first of her kind to vote but eternally unable to be voted. She is always just about to be named the Leader. Eva P., a ghost of true representativity, is powerless, she represents no real multitude. She is just an image of the Other, the one perpetually out of the space of authority, the imperfect powerless double. Brought to the Shelter, Eva P. is the model of anyone becoming a candidate for leadership and never a leader, the perpetual candidate for the great position of presidency, an archetype for the times of the AntiRepublic, when everybody will be a candidate and nobody will be president.

regime started in 1983. The building can be seen as representative for one of the dominant tendencies of the Ceausescu regime: cynically hiding behind a communist and socialist ideological facade, the regime actually implemented oppressive and repressive acts on the population to reinforce obedience, class division and nationalist ideology. The construction is the second largest building in the world and houses today the Parliament, the Secret Service, private companies and the Museum of Contemporary Art. The popular name of House of the People can be viewed as an ironical attitude towards the promises of the cynical "Republic", both in its pre-1989 bureaucratic-communism definition and its post-1989 capitalist-liberal so-called counterpart.

3. Juan Peron. Yo, Juan Domingo Peron: relato autobiografico, Barcelona, Editorial Planeta, 1976.

4. 23 years later the third wife of Juan Peron, Isabel Martínez de Perón will become president of Argentina, after Peron dies.

5. On September 16, 1955, a nationalist Catholic group from both the Army and Navy, led by General Eduardo Lonardi, General Pedro E. Aramburu, and Admiral Isaac Rojas, led a revolt from Córdoba, taking power in a coup three days later, named the „Liberating Revolution“. Perón barely escaped with his life and fled on a Paraguayan gunboat up the Paraná River.

6. The extremely large specter of Eva Peron representations ranges from the sexist, orientaling Hollywood musical *Evita* to the more relative, highly genderized biography by Alicia Dujovne Ortiz, to the idealizing political heroine of “Eva Perón” movie directed by Juan Carlos Desanzo in 1996.

7. The Whore of Babylon or Babylon the Great is a Christian allegorical figure of evil mentioned in the Book of Revelation in the Bible. Her full title is given as „Babylon the Great, the Mother of Prostitutes and Abominations of the Earth“. See Book of Revelation (or the Apocalypse by John), 17:1 – 18.

1. „El peronismo sera revolucionario o no sera nada“, 1950; translation of author and Elena Borrás García.

2. The House of People is the a post-89 name given to the original House of the Republic, a project of the Ceausescu

# We Are All Reptilians Now

Florin Flueras

## We Live a Conspiracy Theory

Conspiracy theories are in a special relation with reality, they are perceived either as the most radical and profound explanation of it or as pure fiction. They are theories of extremes - you make fun of them or you approach them religiously. Or at least this was the case before 2008, now it looks like they become more and more common sense, banal reality. An 1% vs 99% discourse is a headline presence now and slowly by slowly the "financial elites" moved from the weird Internet sites abounding in one eyed pyramids to the mainstream media. It is not so easy to laugh about conspiracy theories anymore.

Conspiracy theories described long time ago the verticalization of power, the pyramidal dominance of the world and of our lives by supra-democratic structures and financial capitalism. Some of the conspiracy theories prefigured also, what is now almost a common place already, the fact that the new economy is centered on the production of subjectivity. In ridiculous, bold, exaggerated and/or religious ways, they managed to give an overview about the contemporary changes that are going on, to prefigure our present and probably our future and to capture the collective imagination. They are contemporary mythologies that can provide an intuition, an overview, a synthesis, a power of explaining in simple ways, what's going on. Boris Groys considers that *following the death of God, the conspiracy theory became the only surviving form of traditional metaphysics as a discourse about the hidden and the invisible. Where we once had nature and God, we now have design and conspiracy theory*(1)

## The Birth of Homo-Saurus

But who are "we" in these last mythologies? In the beginning of the 80s neoliberalism took over and new forms of life were born, a new subjectivity appeared, mainly as a result of increased exploitation of our intimate capacities like affectivity, sensibility, imagination... Some conspiracy theories were very sensitive to these changes, and, as a result, the reptilian was born. The reptilians appeared in the movies, writings, peoples dreams, in repressed memories of abductions extracted under hypnosis and they were retrospectively projected back onto the entire history.

The reptilians are described as cold and calculating individuals devoid of empathy, extremely individualistic and competitive, with lack of compassion, "far less emotionally sensitive than humans". They are mostly from the ruling class, like successfully CEO's, media moguls. And they are contagious, they seek to influence everyone by stimulating the behaviour patterns of the reptile region of the brain that is responsible for hierarchical thinking, aggression, conflict, division, lack of compassion, etc.(2)

Now we know that the reptilians do exist. Of course, in the scientific research they are not called like that but psychopaths. The main characteristic of the psychopath is the same as that of the reptilian, the lack of any empathy with the others. And it seems like the psychopaths are likely to be found in the same places as reptilians, namely business, law, politics and the media, or, to put it in the words of Professor Hare, who did years of research on psychopathic behavior: "Wherever you find money, prestige and power you will find them."(3)



Film still from *They Live*, 1988, by John Carpenter

Psychopathy is a successful adaptive behavior for getting ahead in our type of society. Actually it is in the job description of CEO's, for instance, to be psychopathic. In general if you are sensitive to the ecological, social impact of what you are doing and empathic with human and non human suffering you're out of business. In order to be economically successful you have to be a psychopath. The reptilian was a good description and premonition of psychopathic subject that is produced, privileged and reinforced by neoliberalism.

This is in a way, for the 99%, a very comfortable situation - there are some bad guys, the one per cent of pigs, reptiles or anyway something fundamentally different from us, the relatively good guys, and they do all the bad economico-political stuff. There is a historical tendency to degrade what you want to exploit, dominate, torture or eliminate by identifying them as animals - to compare the victims to animals who deserve such treatments. In this crisis

the same mechanism was set off - there was a lot of hate towards the greedy bankers, hedge funds managers, towards the disgusting animals that started all this collapse.

But Neoliberalism or Financial Capitalism is not only on Wall Street, it is in our habits, patterns of perception and movement, in our attitudes, desires. The most scary thing is not that the psychopaths are privileged and socially and economically rewarded in this Financial Capitalism, but the fact that this new economy and our way of organizing society is producing the psychopath. Recent studies using fMRI and magneto-encephalography (MEG) have established that cultural experience and the way our society is organized radically shapes the microstructure of the brain, virtually influencing all critical brain areas; shaping and determining neural patterns; affecting brain structure; and modulating cognitive function. And empathy seems to be the "obstacle" that is wiped out in a financial reality and a new society that pushes us towards psychopathy.(4) Our bodies and minds are organized by these reptilian impulses and neoliberalism is in our bones and mind patterns - we are all reptilians now.

### The Imperceptible Evil

The new subjectivity was so much different from the previous one of the industrial capitalism that it was perceived as radically alien - it comes from far away, another galaxy or from underground bases. The neoliberal subjectivity appeared as something repulsive, sometimes scary, the new corporate life was perceived as a fundamental evil.

Similar phenomena seem to happen in periods of fundamental socio-economical change. Michael T. Taussig describes how in South America, as a result of colonialism and the appearance of Capitalism, new forms of exploitation appeared with effects like: *the individual is dislocated from the community. Wealth exists alongside crushing poverty. Economic laws triumph over ethical ones. Production, not man, is the aim of the economy, and commodities rule their creators.* All this new situations were perceived as manifestations of the Devil and the collaboration with the new economy was perceived as a contract with the Devil.(5)

This perception changed quickly and the previous horror of capitalist organization of society became ordinary reality, normal everyday life. This kind of normalization seems to be happening all the time and was happening with the reptilian too. At the end of 80s the cultural assimilation/camouflage of the reptilians looks to be completed. Movies like *They Live* or *Society* captured very well this situation - you

need special lenses or a special sensibility to can perceive or feel the reptilians and the horrible things that they (we) do.

In the former Eastern Block we had the same process but with a bit of delay. In the beginning of 90's in Romania, when people started to travel to the West, all kinds of stories about their contact with the capitalist subject appeared. They were depicted as cold, individualist, non empathic, with fake professional smiles, non-human, robot-like, without soul or with a small one. But capitalism arrived at full speed and all these stories are gone, we are the same species now, yet with minor cultural differences. Very quickly the reptilian becomes the normality, and this perception of difference disappears.

It looks like in order to be able to criticize our own form of life we need a contrast, a big shift in the economic and social forces that are producing us. In transition periods between two systems (as it was the beginning of neoliberalism) there are short time-windows in which the shape of the subjectivity can be visible. But what can be done in a situation like the current one when the difference that rendered the production of Homo-Saurus visible has quickly disappeared?

### Becoming Empathic Reptile

One of the favorite solutions of conspiracy theories for defeating the reptilian is love, to *send love right along their energy streams. Make the Reptilians defeat themselves by having them transmit love energy wherever they intend to travel, abduct, possess, etc.*(6) This makes sense, if the reptilian's main characteristic is a total lack of empathy, love as radical empathy seems to be the solution. Love is the opposite of reptilian-neoliberal simple and efficient, profit-oriented algorithms, individualism and permanent competition with the others. Love as radical empathy is one of the few states of being where we can be, sometimes in a dramatic way, triggered out of our economic patterns of perceiving all human and non human presences and relations. Nevertheless, there is a big problem with this kind of solution, it is not very helpful, it's like saying that the solution against poverty is to get rich, which may be true but has little practical use. The problem is that there is no place from where the states of mind and feelings related to love and empathy can be experienced because they are almost erased from the current map of our subjectivity.

Paradoxically, a first step in addressing our reptilian nature can be to go in the opposite direction, to intentionally become reptile, to consciously embody the reptilian. When we intentionally perform the

(micro)behaviours and (micro)perceptions that constitute our reptilian nature, an awareness can appear at this molecular level where the reptilian inserted itself almost unnoticed in the human shape. We can become aware about the way we embody the reptilian and maybe we can start to feel our reptilian features. And this is the moment when mutations start to happen.

*(Speech delivered in the Postspectacle Shelter)*

1. Boris Groys, Self-Design and Aesthetic Responsibility  
<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/view/68>

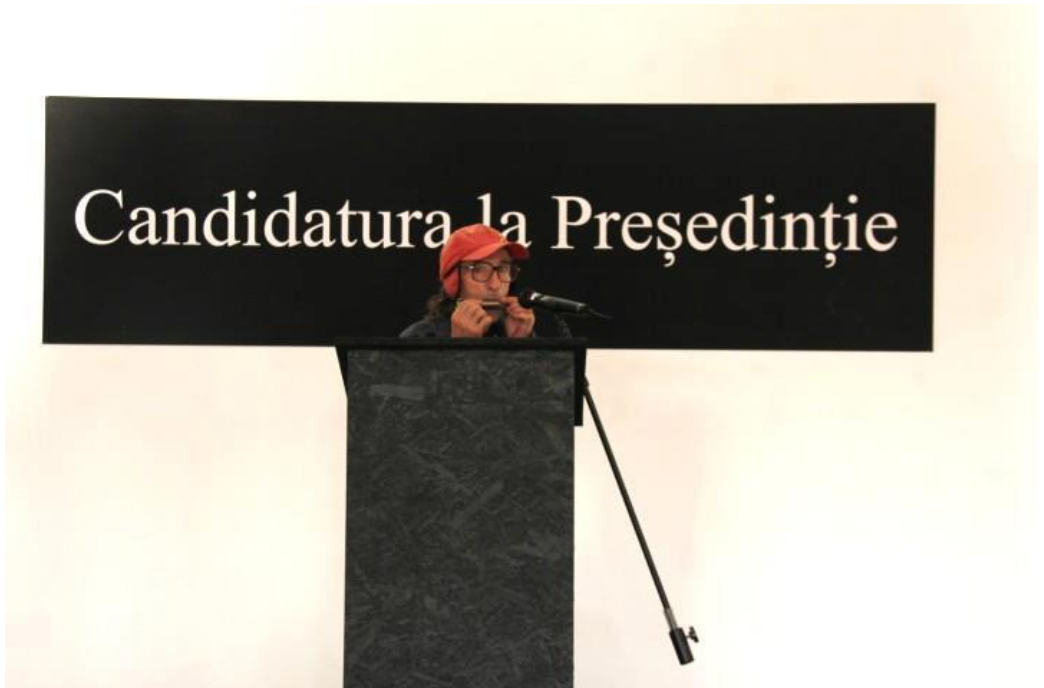
2. David Icke, The Biggest Secret, Scottsdale Arizona: Bridge of Love Publications, 1999

3. A Radical Blackfoot: Capitalism: A System Run By and For Psychopaths,  
<http://aradicalblackfoot.blogspot.com/2007/02/capitalism-system-run-by-and-for.html?m=1>

4. Gary Olson, Empathy and Neuropolitics: This is your brain on neoliberal culture. Any questions?  
<http://home.moravian.edu/public/polsci/pdfs/EmpathyAnd%20Neuropolitics.pdf>

5. Michael T. Taussig, The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010

6. The Mystic Avenger, How to defeat the Reptilians,  
<http://www.mysticalwonders.org/group/about3077.html>



*One of the Presidential Candidates addressing the audience in the Postspectacle Shelter*

GO COMPLETELY OTHER DIRECTIONS, OTHER CONTEXTS, OTHER PEOPLE

SABOTAGE OF THE SYSTEM (EX. TAKE ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW DIRECTOR)

MISUNDERSTANDINGS (EX. MNAC AS "THE HOUSE OF THE PEOPLE". NO LONGER A MUSEUM, AN ART EVENT)

BUT

WE SHOULD LET THE MISUNDERSTANDING PROLIFERATE (ONLY INVITING THE HOMELESS TO MAKE IT THEIR HOUSE)

MUSEUM (EX. MNAC)  
= TOTALIZING SYSTEM OF AUTHORITY-GIVING

WITHIN

EXIT

ALTERNATIVE SPACES (EX. PAVILLON)

REPRODUCTION OF THE SAME STRUCTURES & POWER-RELATIONSHIPS

SYSTEM ALSO WORKING ON THE SUBJECTIVE / SOCIAL LEVEL

SYSTEMS OF AUTHORITY-GIVING EMERGE FROM COLLECTIVE PRACTICES

CHANGE THE ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLE OF THE SPACE

# The Specter of Communist Feminism: Dead Evil Women are Moving Tables!

Mihai Lukacs

The process of institutionalization of the anti-communist discourse in Romania has dramatic effects on how communist women are perceived nowadays. The mainstream historical research on Romanian state-socialism presents communist women leaders as vicious politicians who brought destruction to the nation. The so-called “commissar women” are vilified in various academic articles and popular culture productions as *shadow* (sic!) dictators who actually controlled the whole Party hierarchy and state bureaucracy. They are the un-dead women of the past, creepily living traces in the present and putting the patriarchal future into a danger zone. They are the ultimate specters of communism.

Communist feminism is considered dead and buried by all those who are still talking about it (including neo-conservatives, vulgar Marxists and liberal feminists). Nevertheless, the certainty of the fear of its rebirth is very present discursively, the spectral shadow manages to give chills and re-conceptualize the understanding of negativity and death of a movement. The specter of communist feminism walks the un-dead walk, its death is not certain yet even if it was proclaimed by experts (but you know that you cannot trust them!). The claim that the buried feminism got over the critical point where it can be present with us at the table gives a moment of calmness and quietness, nevertheless the fear of its return from the land of darkness (what we call in Romanian *bezna*) is also present at the same conceptual table. The main narrative regarding communist feminism is an effort to suppress its ghostly appearance. Or in Derrida's words, it is just a negation of its survival: “I have always been interested in this theme of survival, the meaning of which is **not to be added on** to living and dying. It is originary: life *is* living on, life *is* survival. To survive in the usual sense of the term means to continue to live, but also to live **after** death.”[1]

Romanian history answers a contemporary well-spread prejudice concerning the role of women in politics, not only communist women. Lucian Boia writes that “in Romanian historical mythology, the woman is not really wanted.” While he insists on the necessity of positive examples of women in Romanian history, Boia offers “the typology of the accepted woman,” embodied by various queens who transcended their gender through “the sacredness of

the function.” He argues that women who were struggling to overcome the gendered hierarchy are badly seen in history. His example is telling: “the evil-doers triad: Elena Lupescu, Ana Pauker and Elena Ceausescu confirmed the seemingly justified mistrust of the Romanians towards women in power.”[2]

What is rarely acknowledged in the anti-communist historiography, the vulgar marxist amnesia and liberal feminist texts is how communist women have politically struggled for women's rights. Their fight for equality and social justice is in most cases undocumented and scholarly marginalized. Our understanding of contemporary gender roles is strongly connected to this rejection of the struggle of communist feminism.

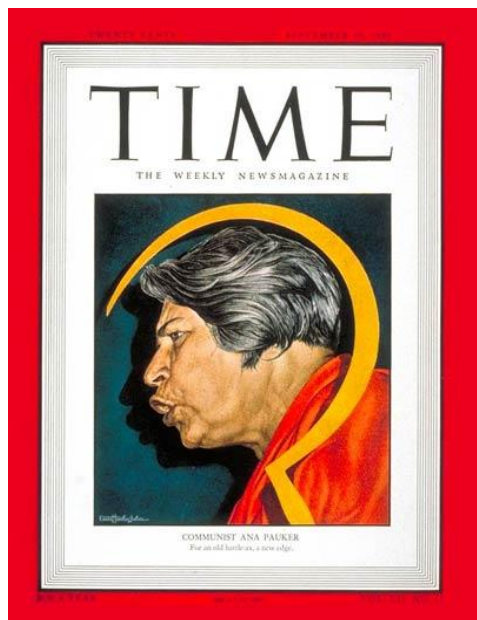
By repeating a state of *not-knowing* about the existence of a feminist activism before 1989 and the mantra that communist women were not *real feminists*, a Cold War paradigm is continued. By discarding the myths of uninvolved communist women in women's cause and communist women as party puppets, another myth is exposed: the import of Western feminist ideas after 1989 in Eastern Europe and their implementation (together with capitalism) on a wasteland.

Coming from all political spectrum, there is a common fear of the disturbing ghosts of communist women which were actively involved during their lifetime in women's rights activism and dreamed to achieve gender equality and better positions in patriarchal cultures such as communist party hierarchies. The existence of a historical communist feminism in Romania can help the contemporary effort for women's struggle for equality, can affirm the continuity of a genuine Eastern European feminism and can counter-balance the vilification of left feminists by the anticommunist and vulgar Marxist rhetoric.

This rhetoric uses key actors like Ana Pauker to get rid of the haunting experience of women demanding equality in a patriarchal culture. Ana Pauker represented the intellectual branch of the Communist Party, in direct connection to an ideological and international understanding of the political struggle and a strong dedication to the Marxist-Leninist and women's liberation ideas. As Romania's Foreign Minister from 1947 to 1952 she was the first woman in the modern world to hold such a post and the first Jew in Romania's history to hold a ministerial position. The *Time* magazine from September 1948 features her portrait on the cover, while she is described in the coverage article as “the most powerful woman alive.” Even if she is



sometimes mentioned in a list of outstanding revolutionary women, her case is untypical: as Robert Levy mentions, she is the first and last woman to make it to the top in the Communist world while promoting other women in high positions and advancing strong feminist ideas locally and internationally.[3]



In post-socialist Romania, Pauker returned from the dead as a legendary figure symbolizing the perceived predominance of Jews in Romanian Communism, the damages of women in politics and the terror of the Stalinist years. She quickly became a key subject of the public discourse on the communist period, as woman, Jewish and internationalist while being negatively contrasted to the ethnic Romanian male patriots, even to leaders such as Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej or Nicolae Ceausescu. The long history of Romanian nationalism offers the same method of distrusting and blaming the other, the foreigner, the Jew, the gypsy or the woman. Ana Pauker was not only hated for being an internationalist Jew and a communist, but also for being a revolutionary woman and for breaking the traditional gender rules. Her specter is still hunting today.

Zoe Petre, an important woman historian and ex-politician, considers that socialism is the first historical epoch which determines a radical autonomy of women's history but socialist women's emancipation should be read negatively in its ensemble. Her critique is based on what she calls

the harshness of women's emancipation and its lack of necessity. Petre affirms that in the interwar period the bourgeois woman's condition was much more evolved in Romania than other regions of the world and radical changes for gender equality were not justified in Eastern Europe. The communists were considered to only use feminist ideas to gain popular legitimation, without any will to promote women's rights. The purposes of gendered politics were, according to Petre, to invent a new labor force needed by the big industrial projects, "to drastically limit the autonomy of the nuclear family", "to cancel traditional solidarities", to control new generations through public education and to erase individuality in favor of collectivity. For this historian, the model of "the mechanical gender equality" manifested through the glorification of the working class women that practiced masculine professions, through the legalization of abortion (which in her claims was tolerated and not forbidden in social practice before 1945) and through the "the brutal secularization of marriage." The themes of this "artificial feminist movement" were embodied by the commissar-woman, characterized by a "visible revolutionary hermaphroditism that embodied the emancipation through women's masculinization." The portraits of masculinized women comrades were assumed to be on every wall while their heroic and asexual biographies were used as models for women and as provocation for men. Petre criticizes the reversal of gender roles, the cancellation of the "soft patriarchal practices" of the interwar period, the rejection of the good social reflexes, the promotion of marginality to the center and the promotion of women that severely usurped the traditional male roles (from mining to tough high political decision-making).[4]

The unsettling and hyperbolic specter of the "devouring female" and the "detoured femininity" is again Ana Pauker, who is presented as a political adventurer and the source of horrifying stories such as the denouncing of her husband during the Stalinist purges. Petre repeats this vampire myth of the Ana Pauker's role in the execution of her husband which was denied by many historians as an impossible scenario (Marcel Pauker was purged in 1938 when she was in prison). Ana Pauker as the commissar woman is characterized by a constant strategy of denying any form of femininity, by severe outfits and disrespectful masculine haircuts. Even if Petre recognizes her marginalization in the 1950s, she argues that the Pauker woman model was privileged by the official propaganda decades later as a positive ghost of the past in the popular culture genres such as women's magazines, TV

shows, cinematography and literature. In contrast to such an outrageously persistent specter, Petre opposes what she calls the heroic resistance of millions of women who strengthen the solidarity of their families by playing the traditional roles of mothers and wives. These women also took the social masculine role of being present on the labor market and in the public space, by letting their children being taken care by the grandparents or much worse, by the public child care (which assumedly determined large scale generational tensions, behavioral problems, even deaths and mental disability). All these efforts were made only for the sake of their families, by keeping at the same time the “traditional values of a normal society” and surviving the forced emancipation.

Coming with a more moderate perspective, two of the most important feminist authors in Romania, Mihaela Miroiu and Liliana Popescu, consider that women’s rights were promoted mainly by intellectual figures and an emerging liberal feminist movement in the interwar period while the “socialist feminism lost its prestige because it was connected with the emancipation dictated from the above by the communist authorities”. Even if they admit that during state socialism important feminist goals were fulfilled, such as the right to vote, the right to work in public (during state socialism 47 percent of the workforce consisted of women), equal salaries, political representation and the right to abortion (between 1945- 1965), they consider that these changes developed without any support from women or women politicians, that these rights were never demanded and struggled for, only imposed by the male communist leaders of the day. These type of critiques emphasize the formal characteristic of women’s rights during state-socialism and the lack of internalization and acknowledgement of those rights by Romanian citizens before 1989. By claiming that communist women were not *real feminists* (like the interwar bourgeois feminists were) and *not-knowing* about the existence of left feminist activism (even if its death is recognized somehow), women’s history is caught up in the old game of red alert.

The real questions are: can the specter of communist feminism make the table turn? Does the specter hold enough strength to survive after death and produce the scary apparition? What would the communist woman say beyond the grave to her fellow comrades, leftists and liberal feminists? Why are you so afraid that the ghost will speak and move the table?

1. Derrida, Jacques. *Learning to Live Finally: The Last Interview*, Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2007, 26.
2. See Boia, Lucian. *Istorie și mit în conștiința românească*. Bucharest: Humanitas, 1997.
3. Levy, Robert. *Ana Pauker: The Rise and Fall of a Jewish Communist*, University of California Press, 2001 and de Haan, Francisca. "Continuing Cold War Paradigms in Western Historiography of Transnational Women's Organisations: the case of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF)." *Women's History* 19, no. 4 (2010): 547 — 573.
4. Petre, Zoe. "Promovarea femeii sau despre destructurarea sexului feminin." in *Miturile comunismului românesc*, vol.I, Bucharest: Humanitas, 1995, 255-271. Bucuresti: Humanitas, 1998.



*Soylent Green (1973) special screening for the homeless in the Postspectacle Shelter*



*Medical Care in the Postspectacle Shelter*



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*APARAT SECURITY offering protection in the Postspectacle Shelter*

# Punishing the Poor in Budapest

Ciumafaiu

This is a short introduction to the situation of the homeless and poor people in Budapest. It is not meant to be an exhaustive account of the situation, but merely a biased view from someone who is in solidarity with the struggles of these people to make a better life for themselves and a better city for all. Some numbers might not be fully right, and some 'facts' are not backed up by proper references. As this is written, in mid-June, the authorities of the 10th District continue to evict and destroy improvised shanty homes in an empty forest that is due to become a tourist place [1]. So this is not an academic text, but a militant one. Its main slogan is: poverty is not a crime!

It is estimated that between 30 and 35 thousand homeless people live in Budapest [2]. Approximately 2700 live in the 8th district, one of the most disadvantaged urban neighborhoods of the city, torn between unemployment and crime on the one hand, and numerous practices of gentrification and renewal on the other hand. During the last year the right wing government of Viktor Orbán introduced a series of repressive measures against homeless and poor people. Through a series of legal amendments introduced by the Ministry of the Interior in December 2010, local mayors could punish "residing in public places". The mayor of Budapest implemented these amendments that were imposing a fine of €150 [3]. This ordinance was found unconstitutional by the national ombudsman. Despite this, Máté Kocsis, the mayor of the Eighth District – Józsefváros, enforced it; numerous homeless people were arrested in the Fall of 2011.

Máté Kocsis is an important actor in the new government's anti-poverty policies. He is now seen as a national expert in the 'homeless issue'. His electoral program, which became the core of his governing concept once he got elected, featured the issue of 'public security, public order and public hygiene' as the first set of problems to be tackled. In this program, order and security are given top priority. The document mentions engagements to spend more than 150 million Hungarian Forints on public security, 'because the safety of the inhabitants' is of crucial importance. In the same direction, Kocsis wants to make the district fully controllable by installing thirty more CCTV cameras in public spaces around the district. This only adds to the myriad of surveillance devices already in existence all around Józsefváros and the rest of

Budapest downtown. The district is to be made safer and public order is to be upgraded by other measures such as the closing down of pubs, cracking down on drug dealers, enforcing police capabilities and creating new police stations in critical junctions throughout the district. Safety and cleanliness are explicitly related to development, and Kocsis also wants to crack down on street vendors and owners of unused spaces, and to enhance the cleaning capabilities of the local sanitation service [4].

But Kocsis does not stop here. What public security and order need the most is a solution to the 'homeless problem'. Kocsis signed a government proposal that is currently being discussed by the Hungarian Parliament. The proposal raises the fine for conducting a "homeless lifestyle" across the country to €500 or imprisonment on people who are found "residing in public places" twice over the course of 6 months. The government plans to open three shelters in Budapest that will partly function as detention centers for those "living on the streets as a form of a lifestyle." The residents of the shelter would be allowed to leave during the day. If they would be found living on the streets, they would be taken back to the shelter, but after the third time, they would be fined or punished by imprisonment or mandatory public labor.

In Józsefváros, other measures, insidious for this vulnerable layer of the society, have been adopted recently. The municipal council of the district made budgetary provisions to cover a 24/7 center for processing those who remain homeless despite the local laws. At the same time, these laws are being supported by additional regulations that display discriminatory features. In March 2011 dumpster-diving was made illegal and punishable by fines. Stories about the homeless persons' experiences appear often in the news. There seems to be a recurrent pattern of events. Individuals are approached by the police while lying on the grass or on a bench and, if they admit to be homeless, are taken to a processing center. It is clear to the authorities that the homeless are unable to pay the fines, so after some time they are released with a citation and often an informal advice to move to a nearby district. So far, no offer of legal assistance from the government has been recorded.

Another interesting and illustrative instance of how poverty and crime are intertwined in the practices of Budapest's 8th district authorities is the appearance, in October 2011, of a group of semi-militarized public order enforcement agents that operate under the name Jófiúk- 'the good guys'. They are an all-

male organization that wears black uniforms and drives heavy armoured black jeeps equipped with strong flashlight torches [5]. These cars are patrolling the streets of the district, seek out potential 'criminals' and report them to the police. Despite their lack of prerogatives, these security forces are an imposing and gloomy sight on the streets of Budapest [6]. Moreover, several members of this organization have shown to have already criminal records themselves, and to be connected to the local mafia [7]. This does not stop these patrols from being an ever-vigilant watching eye, with an eagerness and enthusiasm embodied in the strong torch light on top of their cars, with which they scrutinize every inch of the 8th district's streets, in search for crimes and public disorders [8]. However, the torch seems to be largely inefficient, as a recent report pointed out that crime levels have increased five times since Kocsis became mayor. This was blamed precisely on the reluctance of the local police to cooperate with the Jőfiúk patrols [9].

Security and public safety are clearly crucial elements of the new Budapest administration. The poor and homeless people are one of the main factors that this administration is concerned about in relation to public security. Poverty is seen to breed crime, and thus the areas where the poor live are seen as pockets of illegality. The improvised homeless shelters that are scattered all around the green areas of the city are considered among the main such danger zones. In October 2011, the municipality of one of the richest areas of Budapest [10] destroyed over 20 improvised homeless shelters on the side of the railway. The houses were tore down, and the possessions of their inhabitants were thrown in the garbage truck. People that had been living there for more than twelve years suddenly saw all their belongings vanishing before their eyes [11]. Some of these people have tried to sue the authorities, but the answer that they got was that the decision was not only perfectly legal, but also in their benefit [12]. However, it later appeared that they were only given shelter for one night, and then they were left to sleep on the streets during the entire winter [13]. Two months later, in mid-December, another shantytown area at the periphery of the downtown got targeted by the authorities. The residents protested, and the eviction was postponed until the end of March 2012 [14]. When the day came, the police and district authorities destroyed all the shacks in the area, under the pretext of cleaning the garbage[15]. The people living there were given overnight shelter, but most of them ended up on the streets again [16].

The government seems unwilling to provide alternative housing for these people. The homeless shelters in Budapest are notoriously over-populated, and recently some of these centers have even been closed. Thus, during this winter alone, more than one hundred people died on the streets of the city. Moreover, as we saw, the municipality of Budapest is pursuing an enthusiastic policy of evicting and destroying makeshift shelters or barracks that are built by poor people.

In the eight district, the only newly built shelter is given as an example of their best intentions by the authorities: the shelter is fully equipped with all utilities, it is aimed at socially and 'spiritually' reintegrating the homeless people, and at creating a sustainable mode of inclusion for the future by helping the homeless people regain their 'self-confidence'[17]. However, this shelter can host only twenty people, and its first inhabitants have been selected by a committee appointed by the mayor [18]. Moreover, the shelter is based on strict rules of conduct and a ban on alcohol. This is motivated by the idea that some homeless people are 'degraded' and do not accept any community, except through coercion. The idea of 'community' is a basic principle of the shelter program, which is called LÉLEK-Ház- the Spiritual House. Community building is seen as the main way to re-integrate the homeless people into the society, as 'responsible citizens'. The twenty inhabitants the Spiritual House are encouraged to 'consciously monitor each other' [19]. Another homeless shelter has been also built in the tenth district, but its capacity is even less than the first one – ten people [20]. Therefore, it is hard to see how the authorities are working to solve the problem of homelessness in other ways than to consider it a scourge and a source of criminal activities.

The way in which poverty is being handled by the Budapest authorities points in a certain direction that can be labelled as 'criminalization'. The general phenomenon of poverty is seen as engendering disorder and insecurity. The poorest individuals of the society are being suspected of taking part in this disorder, and increasing it. Moreover, being a poor in itself becomes a crime: the multitude of punishments directed against homeless and beggars in Budapest is testimony to a policy of exclusion based on low income. This also translates into low social status, as the poor are being seen as 'degraded' and impossible to be reintegrated. As such, they are relegated to a state of semi-detainees: under constant surveillance, constant threat of being fined or jailed, under myriads of

coercive rules and bans, the poor people of Budapest are the people that nobody likes to see around. Their presence in public spaces is restricted, the improvised homes that they built are being destroyed, their behaviour is being constantly criticized, and their inferiority is being reminded to them with every occasion. The general discourse unilaterally places all the blame for their condition on the homeless people themselves, and this is why all solutions start with personal change that the poor people have to go through first, in order to be able to reintegrate within the society. Crucially, this personal change implies renouncing 'deviant behaviours' that may lead to crime, dirt and disorder.

The criminalization of homelessness and poverty is being opposed by a small but active grass-roots movement in Budapest. First and foremost, the homeless people have organized themselves to form A Város Mindenkié ('The City is for all'), a very brave and vocal group that sets the tone for the entire movement of resistance, and empowers its members. AVM organizes protests for awareness raising, petitions, sit-ins, occupations and marches. It was behind the local city hall occupation in November 2011 [21], and behind several actions against forced evictions during this winter. It also organized two marches that focused on abandoned buildings in downtown Budapest, and a protest against evicting people who were using the metro passages to live and sleep. Since AVM wants to be composed only of homeless people, several activists have made a parallel group called Börtön helyett lakhatást ('Homes not Prisons'), which participates in AVM actions, and carries the struggle on the legal terrain. Recently, this group composed a petition against the criminalization of poverty [22]. During the occupation of the 8th district's city hall, several members have been arrested and fined.

Generally speaking, the street actions of AVM and BHL are now heavily monitored by the police, as the homeless movement is becoming stronger and stronger in Budapest. Another group that is in solidarity with these actions is the action-samba band ('Rhythms of Resistance') that makes a lot of noise and fuss and music at each action. This group also helps to spread the messages of AVM to an English-speaking audience within the city, and it generally ensures the pink happy atmosphere of festival at protests. The homeless people are not criminals, nor are they drunk or lazy or defeatists: they dance and play and sing. Other groups and individuals join in and show solidarity in actions such as small-scale occupations [23], street

festivals [24], theatre of the oppressed, free-shops and food not bombs. Not everything works out as well as we'd like. But there is solidarity, and the homeless people with their allies are saying NO to the criminalization of poverty in Budapest!

1. <https://picasaweb.google.com/117299540206589838227/Te-rebesiErdo>
2. <http://www.origo.hu/itthon/20120216-az-enzszakertoi-torvenymodositas-kernek-a-hajlektalanok-vedelmeben.html> [16.02.2012]
3. This is the CLIII. law of the year 2011, which is the modification of the LXIX. law of 1999; see here: <http://www.kozlonyok.hu/nkonline/MKPDF/hiteles/MK11137.pdf>
4. Kocsis' program can be found here <http://www.kocsismate.hu/?pid=3&page=2#program>
5. <http://tv2.hu/naplo/video/bevetesen-a-nyolckerben> [29.01.2012]
6. <http://www.community.hu/helyitemak/furcsa-rend-es-furcsa-rendfenntartok-a-jozsefvarosban-2/> [8.03.2012]
7. [http://nagyvaros.hu/Ossztuz\\_a-jozsefvarosi\\_Jofiuk\\_kommandora](http://nagyvaros.hu/Ossztuz_a-jozsefvarosi_Jofiuk_kommandora) [20.03.2021]
8. [http://www.nepszava.hu/articles/article.php?id=505577&refer\\_id=toplist#null](http://www.nepszava.hu/articles/article.php?id=505577&refer_id=toplist#null) [30.12.2011]
9. [http://nol.hu/belfold/a-jozsefvarosi-rendorkapitany-esete\\_a-jofiukkal](http://nol.hu/belfold/a-jozsefvarosi-rendorkapitany-esete_a-jofiukkal) [21.04.2012]
- 10 This is the 14th district, which is a rich residential area, full of embassies and big villas.
11. [http://magyarinfo.blog.hu/2012/04/07/ime\\_ilyen\\_a\\_fidesz\\_hajlektalanpolitikaja?utm\\_source=ketrec&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_content=2012\\_04\\_09&utm\\_campaign=index](http://magyarinfo.blog.hu/2012/04/07/ime_ilyen_a_fidesz_hajlektalanpolitikaja?utm_source=ketrec&utm_medium=link&utm_content=2012_04_09&utm_campaign=index) [7.04.2012]
12. [http://napiasonline.hu/aktualis/rendben-volt-a-hajlektalanok\\_kilakoltatasa\\_36104](http://napiasonline.hu/aktualis/rendben-volt-a-hajlektalanok_kilakoltatasa_36104) [4.04.2012]
13. <http://www.nepszava.hu/articles/article.php?id=536790> [3.04.2012]
14. [http://nagyvaros.hu/Csepel\\_beijedt\\_a-szelsosegesektol\\_Ma\\_rad\\_a-tragikusan-rosszhiru\\_hajlektalantelep](http://nagyvaros.hu/Csepel_beijedt_a-szelsosegesektol_Ma_rad_a-tragikusan-rosszhiru_hajlektalantelep) [13.12.2011]
15. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nH05camDwg&feature=related> [27.03.2012]
16. [http://avarosmindenkie.blog.hu/2012/03/28/ujra\\_kunyhokatorombolt\\_a-ferencvarosi-onkormanyzat](http://avarosmindenkie.blog.hu/2012/03/28/ujra_kunyhokatorombolt_a-ferencvarosi-onkormanyzat) [28.03.2012]
17. <http://www.nepszava.hu/articles/article.php?id=507653#null> [6.01.2012]
18. [http://jozsefvaros.hu/hir/739/Bovu\\_a-LELEK-Haz/](http://jozsefvaros.hu/hir/739/Bovu_a-LELEK-Haz/) [30.01.2012]
19. [http://kobanya.info/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=3828:elindul-a-kbanyai-lelek-program&catid=42:kozelet&Itemid=84](http://kobanya.info/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3828:elindul-a-kbanyai-lelek-program&catid=42:kozelet&Itemid=84) [7.02.2012]
20. <http://www.kobanya.hu/tart/farticle/1/6269/1> [10.02.2012]

21.[http://avarosminderkie.blog.hu/2011/11/23/video\\_of\\_sit\\_in\\_against\\_the\\_criminalization\\_of\\_homelessness](http://avarosminderkie.blog.hu/2011/11/23/video_of_sit_in_against_the_criminalization_of_homelessness) [23.11.2011]

22.<http://www.bortonhelyettlakhatast.com/peticio/list.php>

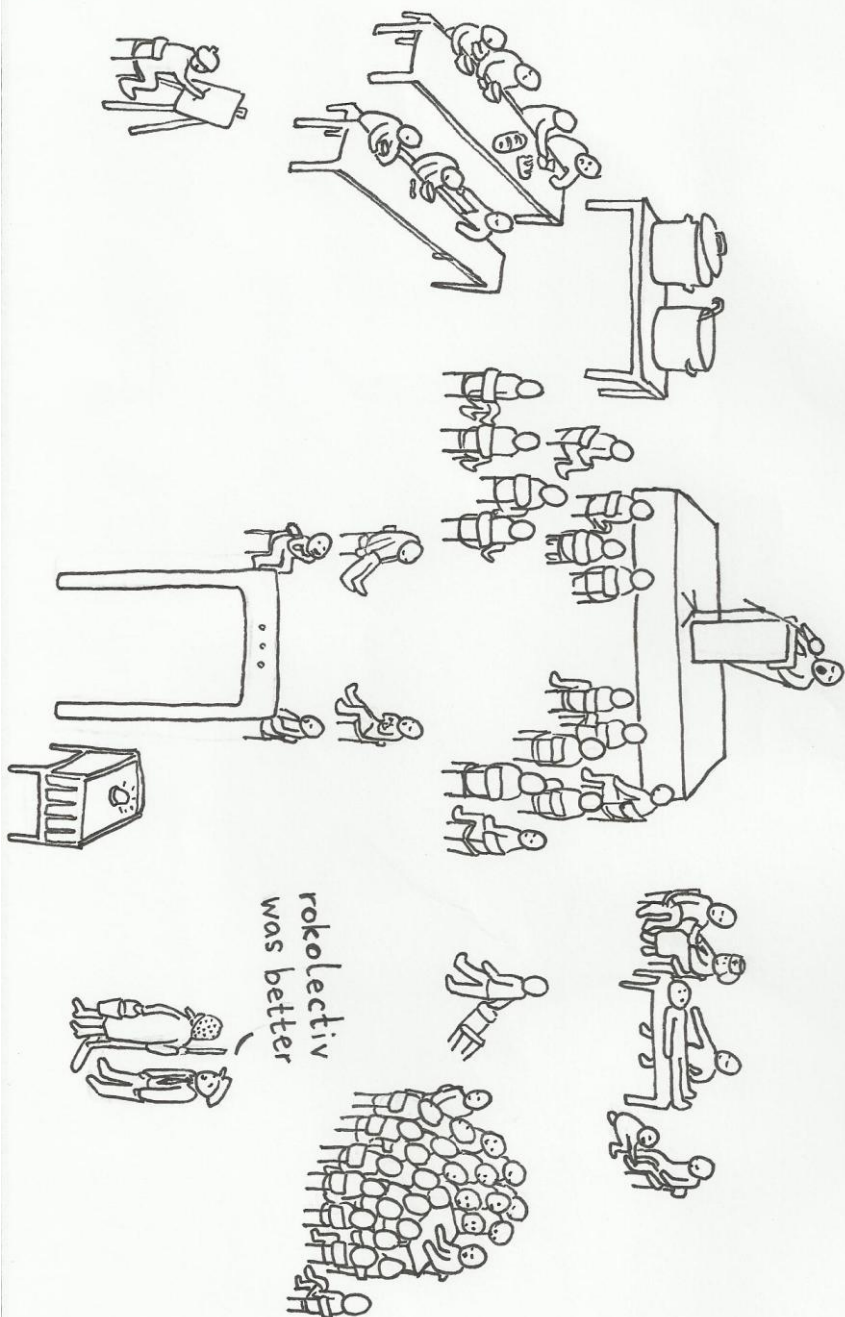
23. Indymedia Budapest, in English  
<http://indymediacall.blogspot.hu/2011/10/evictions-in-14th-district-of-budapest.html> [22.10.2011]

24. <http://kalvariabal.blogspot.hu/>

**What does communism mean, if it can be this wolf in a sheep's clothes?**



# THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY



rokolectiv  
was better



## Survival Architecture in the Global Slum (Part 2)

- building your own shack -

The Presidential Candidate of Romania, 2012

Following today's trend at a global scale, autonomous mega-slums will emerge that will host most of the urban activities in the 21st century (they are already in place in Africa, Asia, and South-America). On the wings of neo-liberalism and free-market, the discrepancy between the formal cities, over-organized (residential, touristic, corporate cities and gated communities) and the informal cities (peripheral slums across the world with immense human density) as well as the distance between the poor - socially unassisted population - and the rich - the powerful minority - will grow so acute that in 2050 we can already talk about two different worlds in the same shell, each one with their own specific architectural perspective. They may coexist in the same country, in the same city but with their boundaries well traced, and not only through physical separation (walls, barbwire, avoiding highways, check-points etc.) but also through cognitive means and symbolic procedures. If today's corporate cities "appear to jump directly from the computer screen" (Keller Easterling) then for the toxic, polluted and dangerous slums we invoke Dante's "Inferno" (anthropologist Michael Taussig about Cali slum in Colombia).

If the phenomenon continues (it has all the ingredients to do so) by 2050 there will be indeed only two hemispheres from a political, economical and symbolical point of view: North and South.

What is now North and South as in a general geo-political division of the world will become in the future a conceptual and symbolic cultural reference to any city notwithstanding the cardinal point where the urban settlement is located on the globe. Among many other distinctions the two poles will be differentiated by the dwelling and architectural solutions for two urgent problems: overcrowding and shortage of resources.

Generally we can envision access to resources, hygiene and a lifestyle/behaviour that will encompass on one side the "North", with stability, heavy protection and "luxury without fear" architecture and on the other side the "South" with precarity, constant improvisation and living in overcrowded spaces (shacks, huts, temporary tenements, roof-dwelling, shanty-towns). The "South" will see entire cities of self-help housing that will

harbour millions of people defined by poverty, mass density and self-organisation while the "North" will live in secured communities, immense office/mall glass structures and isolated residential areas with para-police companies ensuring that any blending with the poor "South" is avoided.

"It would seem obvious that informal housing would strive to become <formalized> [...] but more surprising and less commonly known is the way in which formal housing is transformed by the dwellers through use, growth, and programme, achieving some of the messiness and <para-legality> that characterises informal housing" - Jose Castillo, Saidee Springall - "Negotiating with the power of the informal"

The middle class is also pushed to the margins, or downgraded through financial crises and austerity measures therefore in the new world economy more than half of the global urban population should be able to build their own shack.

At the opposite spectre, the only thread that survives today from modern architecture - and will still be determinant in the world of star architects - is technological innovation. Cutting edge tools and new building materials - that are available to less and less people - have already surfaced mega-structures that one can witness in awe on Discovery Channel and National Geographic and it's clear that the future will host more of those in vivid contrast with the shantytowns that will spread all around these futuristic constructions. It is thus imperative that architects come to terms with urban shantytowns and integrate social- political critique.

It seems that the only reference for the signature architect hired to build in Dubai, Kazakhstan or Shanghai is himself and the academy. If at the end of the nineteenth century and for most of the twentieth the idea of social relevance within planning was still at the forefront of research (especially after WWII, "sozial bau" or social-realism in the eastern communist block) nowadays for the urban developers in the emerging economies these noble principles have disappeared.

In the echo of socialist utopians such as Fourier today's slums offer a strange and twisted parallel. The poverty explosion, a sort of proletarianisation outside industrial development that was not foreseen by Marx, Max Weber or Keynes is something that infers a new and yet old characteristic to this image of the future. Segregation will reoccur stronger than ever but only and strictly through wealth criteria.

But there is already in operation a sort of strange (depoliticised) fascination with the slum inhabitants

and their self-organisation capabilities. It started in the seventies when architect anarchist John F.C. Turner joined team with the head of World Bank, the infamous Robert McNamara. Neo-liberalism met anarchism and proposed in situ slum upgrading and zero responsibility from the state. The results of these experiments were devastating for the subject states.

Today this is still a trend in the Northern (ex-Western) hemisphere but in a more disguised, “humanised” way, from Prince Charles to CNN with the contribution of some documentary films and Oscar winning Slum Dog Millionaire, everyone is amazed by the biggest ghettos of Lagos, Mumbai or Rio de Janeiro, finally the West is seeing the good side of the fourth (ex-third) world, the netherworld. The developed countries discover there, in the communities around the dump, the wild and unrestrained neo-liberalism put into practice, free-market in its rawest version. The proto-capitalist seem to thrive in the garbage! Plus, they see the bio/eco ethos put into action, Europeans remark the advantages with envy: strong communal activity and organization, minimal consuming per capita, around the clock recycling and, of course, “pure humanism” (in some cases even zero criminality!).

The former West is bewildered by the serenity of the population flourishing in this “substandard” and “un-habitable” environment. A sort of DIY system, informal (non-legislated) that can manage for example two million people (Mumbai), functioning in the logic of game theory, that emphasises the individual self-determination and proves (in a very twisted way) how one can reach the infamous point of equilibrium, in this case survival point, in the most precarious conditions. As Hans Schenk wrote in a study, a place where “Darwin beats Keynes”.

This is how slums look nowadays from the “former” colonists perspective. It’s clear that we have to prepare for the global dysfunction and consequently start to look truly outside the box but not by abandoning the political debate through fetishising the slum dwellers. Also former western and world Architecture (schools of architecture etc.) should stop applauding purity and disengagement from the task of defining the city and start focusing on the majority that will occupy the urban areas in this very close future.

The cynical idea that lurks behind can be simply articulated: it is already predictable that the Fourth and Fifth Worlds will never catch up with the heavy industrialised nations, actually large chunks of the First World are being downgraded as we speak moving rapidly towards “south” conditions, meaning

that soon only two worlds will emerge, defined by wealth and poverty, and by 2050 this will partly be achieved within all these developed and less developed countries.

The gap will be reduced but not as promised through propaganda, the lower income countries (slave labour countries) will not be raised to higher levels of living, they will not adjust to the “civilised” world, more likely Europe and United States will move down the ladder, with their own home grown versions of slum and poverty.

Or as Mike Davis puts it in terms of urban futurology:

“[...] the cities of the future, rather than being made out of glass and steel as envisioned by earlier generations of urbanists, are instead largely constructed out of crude brick, straw, recycled plastic, cement blocks, and scrap wood. Instead of cities of light soaring toward heaven, much of the twenty first century urban world squats in squalor, surrounded by pollution, excrement, and decay.” –

Mike Davis, “Planet of Slums”, London: Verso, 2006



*‘Food Bank’ in the Postspectacle Shelter*

Excerpt from *Tragic Seconds, Heroic Days*.  
March the 4<sup>th</sup> 1977, The Cronicle Of An  
Earthquake

After George Alfred Neagu



Ceaușescu shows

Reporter accompanying the first citizen of Romania:

“... In the flashlight he enters without hesitation through the ruins of a basement, in which stood about to collapse eroded concrete structures. Here, the engineers hesitated to enter. He is checking with his hand the resistance of the collapsed panels.

- Puncture here! And there! There still must be people in there!

After he came out, the rescue team slips firmly inside. Hours of hard work, under threat of broken concrete beams, all in a precarious balance! Through a hole in a panel, one by one are coming outside, staggering, four people blinded by the daylight, after the **bezna**\* they considered eternal.”



Generals are helping

So, Ceausescu takes you out of the **bezna**!

Today we can say: “Out of this **bezna** we came and woke up with the House of the People (Casa Poporului) built on the ruins left behind by the earthquake and the helping hand of Ceausescu.



Ceaușescu cares

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\* consistent darkness + diffuse fear

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